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is one of the most interesting. Here we have an account of the efforts of Philadelphia and Baltimore to secure the trade of the Susquehanna, and of these towns and New York to capture that of the Middle West. This competition was active in the days of canals, and was intensified when the construction of railroads threatened to deprive New York of the advantage given her by the Erie canal. But not only was there rivalry between the seaboard cities, but Troy and Albany, Nashville and Chattanooga, Cincinnati and Louisville, not to mention other places, fought vigorously for rail connections in order to preserve their commercial lives. These conflicting interests, stimulated by the persuasive appeals of railroad promoters, led naturally to local and state aid, which took the form of subsidies, grants of lands, subscriptions, exemptions, and the like. The authors have ransacked the reports of state officers, the files of contemporary papers, the testimony before and proceedings of official bodies, the statutes of the different states, and other sources in order to secure trustworthy data as to the forms and amount of this aid, and have been able to condense the result of much laborious research into convenient form. Finally, they describe the part which the national government took in facilitating the construction of numerous enterprises of which the Pacific railroads were the most important. All this treatment is detailed, specific, and useful.

Besides the chapters which have been mentioned there is some discussion of railroad promotion in general and a good critical bibliography. The book is distinctly serviceable, and can be recommended.

STUART DAGGETT

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

*Wealth and Want. A Study in Living Contrasts and Social Problems.* By W. B. NORTHRUP. London: Francis Griffiths, 1909. 8vo, pp. 334. 5s. net.

The author of this work, leading up to the theory that abolition of private property in land is the only way of social justice, presents a series of contrasts, in words and in pictures, designed to show the gulf that is fixed between the lives of the very rich and the lives of the very poor. Eccentric in his urgency and naive in his implications that land-ownership is the source of every evil, he is obviously earnest and sincere. One must dispute the conclusiveness of the pictorial arguments presented; but undeniably such contrasts as these photographs reveal set one seriously to thinking.

*Unemployment: a Problem in Industry.* By W. H. BEVERIDGE. London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909. 8vo, pp. xvi+317.

*Problems of Unemployment in the London Building Trades.* By NORMAN B. DEARLE, with an Introduction by L. L. PRICE. London: J. M. Dent & Co. 8vo, pp. xviii+215. 3s. 6d.

It is one of the encouraging signs of the times that intelligent people are beginning to question the inevitableness of unemployment as a matter-of-course accompaniment of our competitive industrial system. These two books will be cordially welcomed by students of the labor problem everywhere, coming as

they do at this time of the Poor Law Commission Report and of the widespread attention the problems of unemployment and casual labor are receiving on both sides of the Atlantic.

Mr. Dearle's monograph is a careful and intelligent study of a single trade, and forms a valuable supplement to Mr. Beveridge's more general treatment of the problem.

Mr. Beveridge gives a masterly analysis of the nature and causes of unemployment; a keen criticism of remedies which in England have been attempted in the past; and an able discussion of the principles that should guide future policy. Seasonal fluctuation; cyclical fluctuation; the reserve of labor; loss and lack of industrial efficiency due to changes in industrial structure; advancing years; deficiencies in industrial training; and, finally, defects of personal character are treated, in as many chapters, as salient points in the problem. Seasonal fluctuation, whatever its cause, is a surface phenomenon: it may not even lead to the actual discharge of workmen; it may be offset to some extent by "dove-tailing" employments; but it ultimately becomes a question of wages. "No industry is self-supporting unless it pays wages sufficient to keep men, not only while they are at work, but also while they must stand idle and in reserve." Cyclical fluctuation is so far as we can see now inevitable; it could be totally eliminated only at the loss of industrial progress. Cyclical fluctuation of employment is of course a phase of alternation of prosperity and panic. The treatment of industrial depressions, necessarily brief as it is, is one of the least satisfactory portions of the book. The author's conclusion that the right adjustment between immediate consumption and investment for future returns comes about "naturally through economic forces" strikes the reader as the relic of an old faith in the universality of "economic law" and the beneficence of *laissez faire*. While cyclical fluctuations, in Mr. Beveridge's view, may have economic justification, that does not at all lessen the weight with which they bear upon the laborer; their course, he concludes, is strewn with industrial disasters which make palliative measures necessary.

The treatment of the "reserve of labor" is extremely interesting. The existence of what our socialist friends call the reserve labor army, or at least of a reserve army, is demonstrated; on the other hand the conditions creating it are so fundamental and complex that one may doubt even the power of omniscient socialism to eliminate it altogether. While trade-union statistics reveal an "irreducible minimum" of unemployment of never below 2 per cent., the great glut of labor comes in the unskilled trades. The "central paradox" of the unemployed problem is that "whatever the demand for labor, the supply tends always and everywhere, not only to coincide with it, but to exceed it." The explanation is "that there is no one labor market but only an infinite number of separate labor markets." This is admirably shown in the discussion of the economics of casual employment where it is brought out that through disorganization of the labor market the typical unemployed are not industrial parasites but the casual laborers who swarm in certain employments. A finer example of the way theoretical reasoning and observation of actual conditions may advantageously be combined it would be hard to find, than this analysis of casual labor and the lack of central labor exchanges. Mr. Beveridge illustrates his analysis by the case of dock labor. Substantially the same conclusions

would be reached by reference to Mr. Dearle's description of the disorganization of the labor market in the building trades. "To call employment in the building trade a lottery is to use the language not of metaphor but of literal description."

The reserve of labor is a feature of nearly all industries. Leakage of labor power is found to some extent in nearly all occupations and among nearly all grades of workmen. The tendency springs from the multiplicity of separate employers and the irregularity of their separate businesses. The more numerous and scattered the separate employers and the more rapid the fluctuations in their needs for employees, the larger will be the reserves of labor required and the stronger the tendency to their accumulation. Thus comes about a vast amount of unemployment over and above the irreducible minimum and outside the more notorious casual trades. It amounts to "sweating" of a very insidious kind.

As to the solution: The problem has to be seen not as one "of rescuing individuals, but of reforming an industrial method; as a problem not of grappling with an emergency, but raising a general level of life." The central task is to provide a reserve of labor power in such a way as not to involve distress. The labor market must be organized just like any other market; labor must be decasualized, and such subsidiary remedies or palliatives as emigration, afforestation, etc., are to be encouraged. Chief of the specific projects of reform is the establishment of central labor exchanges, the function of which will be to diminish the ignorance of laborers concerning the place and extent of demand for labor, now the cause of much immobility, and to send laborers where they are wanted. Policies looking toward the furnishing of work by the government are to be avoided. The Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 is given almost unqualified condemnation. "Its main service has been to demonstrate beyond question its own essential inadequacy and the inadequacy of all measures which, like itself, leave industrial disorganization untouched and deal only with the resultant human suffering."

No doubt the student of economics will find much to question in Mr. Beveridge's pages, as for instance his contention that unemployment is never due to general over-population, and his proposal to encourage the emigration to Canada of those men who are "squeezed out" of employment by the decasualization process which he rightly wishes to see begun. An American simply wonders how long it would be before these undesirables had worked their way across the southern boundary line of Canada. The treatment of the population question in its relation to industrial organization and remuneration is altogether too cavalier in nature, and as before noted, the discussion of industrial crises is superficial. But for all that, the real value of the book is not to be questioned. It is worthy a permanent place on the bookshelf of the economist and in the hands of the reformer. It contains a well-arranged bibliography, and an admirable analytical index.

A. B. WOLFE

OBERLIN COLLEGE

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*Outlines of the Economic History of England.* By H. O. MEREDITH. London: Pitman, 1908. 8vo, pp. viii+366. \$2.00.

Professor Meredith's *Outlines* is a brief textbook intended for use in the English universities. This history begins practically with Domesday, the intro-